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President: Mr. Mavroyiannis ..... (Cyprus)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 109 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/62/1)

Mrs. Asmady (Indonesia): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his first report on the work of the Organization (A/62/1). We very much value his overview of what was accomplished over the past year and his highlighting of the various factors that need to be addressed in the future. This is an extremely important report for my delegation, as Indonesia has always stood for a robust United Nations that plays a central role in international affairs.

The report comes at a critical juncture in the history of the United Nations, not least because of the change at its helm. It would not be wrong to say that the world is going through a period of turbulence and uncertainty. Climate change, geopolitical upheaval, uneven progress in the economic and social fields and large pockets of persistent poverty globally are some of the crucial challenges confronting peoples of the world. We will tackle these issues effectively only if the international community reaffirms its commitment to the multilateral approach and if it does so from the most credible world platform available to the community, the United Nations.

But merely highlighting the stature of the Organization is not sufficient. All Member countries must show through their actions that they recognize the primacy of the United Nations in solving global challenges, and fully support its organizational requirements and its aims.

While we instinctively associate the United Nations with world peace and security, we would do just as well to associate it with development. Development is, to a large extent, a prerequisite for peace and security. That is why we must not subordinate the development role of the United Nations to any other it has to play on the world stage. That means that the development agenda of the United Nations, and in particular the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), must be accorded priority and carefully attended to in order to win and keep the peace.

This being 2007, we are at the halfway point of the period set for the achievement of the MDGs. Yet the results have been less than spectacular overall. Those who most desperately need to achieve the MDGs find themselves still unable to do so. In contrast to the bright spots of Asia, the situation remains dire in sub-Saharan Africa. There, several countries are not on track to achieving a single MDG. In many developing countries, particularly in their rural regions, people weather the vicissitudes of poverty every day. Their plight is being worsened by the impact of climate change. The Secretary-General does not mince words on this matter: "The Millennium Development Goals and the other internationally agreed development goals

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cannot be achieved... if we do not tackle climate change" (*A/62/1, para. 11*).

In response to that, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono recently echoed that sentiment while addressing the General Assembly. On global warming, he said that "we are much more interdependent than we thought in terms of the causes, symptoms and solutions" and that there was "the need for urgency, which means the need for action and the need to think outside the box" (*A/62/PV.5, p. 23*).

As a high-risk nation and the venue for the thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, Indonesia attaches great importance to this issue. We expect that the Bali Conference, which will be held in December, will set the stage for the establishment of a global partnership to address climate change. Out of it should emerge concrete actions and rationalized targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions after the Kyoto Protocol expires, in 2012.

Even as developing countries build the capacity to deal with climate change, they must not ignore other aspects of capacity-building that are crucial for their development. Enlightened self-interest must cause them to practice good governance and respect for the rule of law and human rights. In all of that, national efforts must be reinforced by international support, especially from the donor community. Global partnerships are also required.

The success of global partnerships will hinge on the necessary political will. In concrete terms, they must lead to the fulfilment of international commitments. Instead of decreasing, as it did last year, official development assistance should increase. So too should foreign direct investment, which has so far shown itself partial to only a few select emerging economies.

The time has now come for the Doha Development Round to live up to the expectations of the developing world. Distorting subsidies, limited market access and the need for special and differentiated treatment must be tackled urgently.

In order to be able to make effective interventions to resolve those matters, the United Nations must be strengthened through comprehensive reform. It must become the fulcrum to realize a just and equitable world order. While we note meaningful progress on some fronts, the capacity of the United Nations must be further enhanced to address the global challenges of the twenty-first century that lie before it. The reform process must impact all organs of the Organization in order to maintain the proper balance among them in accordance with the vision of the Charter.

My delegation has long believed that the General Assembly, as the highest deliberative and decision-making organ of the United Nations, should embody the fullness of its capability. The General Assembly must exercise the full authority granted to it under the Charter of the United Nations and the Security Council must be adapted to reflect current geopolitical realities.

In that context, no opportunity should be lost to move forward the global agenda on the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation. As highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General, "The quest for a more peaceful and secure world is one of the main pillars of the work of the Organization" (*para. 42*).

The absence of consensus for action on those two challenges should be a cause for deep concern by all. An important first step should be to free the Conference on Disarmament from its paralysis. Likewise, the restructuring of the Secretariat in the disarmament field is very important. We are confident that under the direct supervision of the Secretary-General, the Office for Disarmament Affairs could be made more effective in achieving its mandate.

Until there is the total elimination of nuclear weapons, Indonesia remains firmly convinced that non-nuclear-weapon States should be assured that such weapons will not be used in any situation of conflict. While the Secretary-General has reflected on the three issues to be negotiated within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, the issue of negative security assurances has not attracted much attention. That matter should not be overlooked.

In fighting terrorism, our view is that that international scourge is best tackled from the roots up. More will be needed than the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which was adopted last year as resolution 60/288, to decisively overcome that problem. We must redouble our efforts to settle outstanding issues linked to the draft comprehensive

convention on international terrorism, which is long overdue.

The Secretary-General's report also shines the spotlight on various conflicts in the world that deserve international attention. We welcome the greater use of the Office of the Secretary-General in the resolution of such disputes. We expect that the standing team of mediation specialists will effectively supplement the work of the Secretary-General in that area. We hope that, with the involvement of all the parties concerned, further action will be taken to find concrete solutions to festering global conflicts, particularly those in the Middle East and Africa. Certainly, the engagement and the costs required to defuse potential hostilities before war actually erupts will be much less than after was occurs.

In the face of protracted conflicts, we find there is an ever-increasing demand for United Nations peacekeepers. That surge in peacekeeping demands is unprecedented, with the trend likely to continue for some time. In terms of United Nations peacekeeping, Indonesia has a proud tradition of participation going back to 1957. We will in fact be contributing a police unit for the Hybrid Operation in Darfur. Last year, in response to the conflict in south Lebanon, we were one of the first countries that offered to reinforce the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. The capacity of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the field and at Headquarters needs to be enhanced, with the strongest possible support for peacekeeping missions.

In handling that mandate, we are convinced that the agreed basic principles of peacekeeping — consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence and in the defence of the authorized mandate — are essential to both the safety and the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, we are particularly pleased that the Commission quickly came of age during the first year of its operation by considering two country cases. The task before us is to translate the Commission's commitment into tangible measures on the ground.

In the sphere of the promotion of basic human rights, we are pleased to learn of the Human Rights Council's establishment of the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism. This is an innovative mechanism which my delegation believes will contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights on a basis of equality. It will serve to minimize the politicization of human rights and the use of double standards in evaluations, as we experience now. We look forward to the early operationalization of the mechanism as it begins its work next year. This will be a significant milestone for the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

However, we should be duly cautious when dealing with the report's support for the concept of the responsibility to protect, on which we decided during the 2005 Summit. We continue to believe that, in practice, this will contravene the principle of the equality of States in international relations. We firmly believe no pretext should be created for interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

In conclusion, Indonesia reiterates its full support for and willingness to cooperate with all those who endeavour to promote multilateralism. We view multilateralism as our shield against injustice and disrespect in international relations and as our most valuable tool to build a better world.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Let me express my delegation's great appreciation to the Secretary-General for the exhaustive report on the work of the Organization during the first year of his mandate (A/62/1). Whoever reads the report will attest that the Secretary-General understands well the peoples' expectations of the United Nations and the Organization's major responsibility in multilateral cooperation for finding appropriate solutions to the many global challenges that humanity confronts.

The Secretary-General is fully aware of the need to produce results commensurate with the problems that need to be resolved. He has also developed an acute sense of the urgency of the action required. My delegation would like to reiterate here our trust in him and in his entire team, and our firm support.

An old African saying tells us that we should use the end of the old rope to weave the new. The Secretary-General can be proud of having been able to build on what has been achieved in the reforms launched in 2005 by the Member States convened here at the highest level by his predecessor, Mr. Kofi Annan, to whom my delegation would like to pay a resounding tribute.

The report of the Secretary-General clearly identifies the most promising areas for measurable results and focuses our attention on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly in Africa, where the forecasts are the most alarming vis-à-vis the established timelines.

We share his determination to move forward. However long the road to attaining the goals in Africa may seem, we can get there if we resolutely reject defeatism and identify the short cuts which can get us to our goals. It is fortunate that the United Nations has clearly defined its own role, in particular, in the dissemination of methods and procedures that have proven themselves elsewhere in similar situations, and in mobilizing the resources needed for their large-scale application in making strides against extreme poverty.

The Millennium Villages have proven their worth, but they should not be something only for the happy chosen few. The Secretary-General has put his finger on the heart of the problem in this regard: the need to mobilize the necessary resources to extend them to the two score countries in Africa which are ready to be a part of the initiative.

Like the Secretary-General, my delegation urgently appeals to the international community to make an increased effort of solidarity. We need to wake up dormant local capacities so that the underprivileged can become agents in the sustainable improvement of their living conditions.

In the same spirit, we thank the Secretary-General for having underscored here the expected benefits of improved integration of African countries in international trade through the suppression of the agricultural subsidies which prevent them from exploiting their comparative advantages on the international market and thus from attaining prosperity. But they have to be freed from fratricidal conflicts, which can be prevented through better governance of our societies, fairer distribution of national income and greater respect for different identities and minorities.

We need also to take account of an inescapable reality, climate change, which poses such a major challenge for Africa. Unless it is included in our planning for Africa, climate change can undermine the accomplishments we have already achieved in our work towards the MDGs. All aspects of the issue need to be looked at. Forecasting and prevention have to be the key words here: forecasting, to help African countries amass the vital stocks they need to mitigate the impact of natural disasters; and prevention, at least to limit their effects by building the necessary infrastructure.

In this regard, the Benin Government is planning to construct an embankment along the coast to protect it from ongoing coastal erosion, which is swallowing up territory day after day. This obviously means a high level of investment which is beyond the capacity of resource mobilization at the national level. Nonetheless, such resources are indispensable.

Turning to issues of peace and security, the efforts under way on the African continent, with the help of the United Nations, are certainly laudable, because strengthening the mechanisms established in Africa is of vital importance. I would like to echo the appeal to the Security Council issued several days ago by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in favour of a creative re-reading of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. We look forward to the Secretary-General's report on this question.

In the view of my delegation, the situation is simple: Africa would like to take its place in the collective security system instituted by the Charter. It is asking for that, within a partnership based on a balanced allocation of roles. We are counting on the Secretary-General to promote this partnership, in a spirit of faithfulness to the Charter and in the quest for efficiency with the pragmatism that is appropriate when saving human lives. We are happy to note that these criteria have indeed prevailed in the way in which the issue of Darfur has been treated.

Similarly, we welcome the efforts deployed by the Secretary-General in order to strengthen the capacities of the United Nations in the area of mediation, preventive diplomacy and restoring peace.

In the course of these recent years, it has become obvious that the United Nations must review its policy in the area of response to complex crises. The necessity of rapid troop deployment means that forces have to be available and that they have to be well trained and well equipped if they are to participate effectively in stabilization operations.

It is fortunate that developed countries are becoming increasingly involved at the operational level, as in the deployment of the European Union in Chad and the Central African Republic. This helps to

make up for weaknesses in the capacities of developing countries' armies, which, until recently, shouldered most of the responsibility of the international community in Africa.

When it comes to peacebuilding, we think that all countries that emerge from a conflict should be eligible for the interventions of the Peacebuilding Commission, which should come up with a true Marshall Plan for such countries. The strategic frameworks of such interventions should aim at sustainable financing, among other things, by creating matching funds that multiply tenfold the impact of the contributions already mobilized. It must be emphasized that these contributions remain relatively modest.

The adoption by consensus of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was a true turning point in mobilizing Member States against the scourge of terrorism, which is to be condemned in all its manifestations. In this regard, my country participated actively in the Vienna symposium in May 2007 in order to promote the implementation of this global strategy through an integrated approach.

We are convinced that this approach will provide us with results only if it strengthens the capacity of States to fulfil their sovereign functions from the viewpoint of protecting human lives and goods and exercising effective control over the territory under their jurisdiction, as well as promoting the necessary stability to ensure balanced economic and social development.

With respect to disarmament and non-proliferation, the Secretary-General has showed what his preferences are, and we have followed suit, counting on him to bring those States that are key actors in this area to show consistency in their efforts to strengthen international peace and security. No effort should be spared to make sure that the logic of peace prevails in their relations. We pay tribute to the Secretary-General for the positive signals that seem to be appearing in this area.

All of humankind stands to benefit both from specific initiatives to reduce the level of military spending and from the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, whose potential to cause harm is well known to us.

The Secretary-General rightly underscores the affirmation of the responsibility to protect as a new international standard compatible with the Charter of the United Nations, which the international community should stand ready to exercise in the service of human dignity, just as it has deployed efforts to establish the authority of institutions of international criminal justice. We are calling for more frequent recourse to international justice and, in particular, to the International Criminal Court. The international community must take full advantage of the deterrent capacity of the Court in respect of crimes within the Court's jurisdiction.

It would be desirable that it also contribute, as a secondary effect, to the enhancement of the respect for human rights as a set of universal values that maintain their applicability everywhere. In this regard, cultural diversity, which is a positive good, being a framework for the expression of identities that represent the richness of humanity, should not be used as a pretext to perpetuate practices that belong in the past and are deeply offensive to our collective conscience.

My delegation firmly supports the principle of unity of action in emergency situations. This principle will be of value only if there is integrated coordination that takes advantage of synergies in the field in order to be more effective in protecting victims and afflicted persons.

We are confident that the clear-sightedness of the Secretary-General will guide Member States in the implementation of their reforms for greater coherence. We thus adhere to the recommendations of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence in order to strengthen the Organization's ability to act in the service of its mission. We have to redouble our efforts to make sure that the institutional reform moves forward, especially the expansion of the Security Council in both categories of members. In accordance with the Ezulwini Consensus, my delegation is asking for two permanent seats for Africa and two non-permanent seats, to enable the architecture of peace and security on the continent to be integrated harmoniously in the collective security architecture set up by the Charter.

In conclusion, my delegation thinks that a revitalized General Assembly is an enterprising General Assembly that fully shoulders its responsibilities and prerogatives vis-à-vis other bodies

and is supported by Secretariat that performs at the very top of its abilities.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly is concluding this morning the review of the first annual report on the work of the Organization that the Secretary-General, since his election, presented to us, in accordance with Article 98 of the Charter.

My delegation believes that it is a solid and informative report. It is excellent in two ways. First, it is a document that has the merit of emphasizing the irreplaceable role of the United Nations for humanity, as it seeks suitable responses to the many problems with which it is confronted, in particular, with regard to peace and security, development and human rights, and climate change. The response to all these challenges cannot be undertaken unilaterally or by a group of States. The report is also excellent because it points to the ways and means to meet these challenges. For us, it will serve as a compass. I would like to mention, in particular, some of these challenges by which the value of our commitments and the degree of our political will, so often affirmed and reaffirmed, will be judged.

First, there is the thorny question of attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The fact, unfortunately, is that most developing countries may not attain them by 2015 because poverty continues to increase, particularly in rural areas. Investments for health and education are in significant decline. We are still awaiting the great increase in official development assistance (ODA) which was meant to support the efforts of developing countries.

The situation of Africa is of particular concern. One must wonder what happened to the solemn commitments undertaken by heads of State, both at the Millennium Summit and at the 2005 World Summit, to respond to Africa's special needs. Seven years away from 2015, we must once again urgently appeal to the international community, in particular to the donor countries, to keep the commitments they have made in various international forums regarding official development assistance.

In this respect, we have been assured that the Secretary-General will not delay in strengthening the Office of his Special Adviser on Africa. That Office provides impetus for present and future action to respond to the special needs of Africa and consolidates all the various initiatives for that purpose. We will return to that question later, but I think we should emphasize the importance of this Office. This post of Adviser is in line with the dynamic of creating administrative Secretariat structures and their budget lines in order to support, as required, specific programmes of activities set out in the medium-term plan or the programme plan.

In that respect we would like to recall again that at the September 2005 World Summit heads of State or Government, in follow-up to the Millennium Declaration, adopted a series of special measures linked to the specific needs of Africa, which continues to be one of the Organization's main priorities. We believe that we should continue to address this priority separately at a very high level in accordance with the will and political decisions of heads of State at the Millennium Summit and at the 2005 World Summit.

As an operational structure, the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa is responsible for mobilizing public opinion in the world so that the continent will remain at the top of the international agenda. Furthermore, the Office is, in a way, a coordinator and overall monitor. It assembles in an annual report the contributions of United Nations bodies regarding the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and it proposes the strategic direction of those reports. It also actively follows the synergies developed in the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the Group of Eight (G-8) and more recently with countries such as India, the Republic of Korea and Brazil with a view to a partnership aimed at greater development of Africa.

In other words, the Office has multiple functions, some of which come from the former Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, the previous focal point in the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation in the 1980s. Others still are new and constantly evolving without being entirely in line with the dynamic of the least developed countries and other categories of developing countries, which are the object of completely different special global or regional programmes and processes.

With all those responsibilities, we believe that the Office should retain all due importance, while maintaining its integrity and gaining new vitality

through strengthened financial and human resources, an improved programme structure and, in particular, the appointment of a new Adviser without further delay. That is the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) in their respective annual reports. It is also an urgent request of the African Group.

We were reassured to hear the Secretary-General, as he started his mandate, affirm that he attached great priority to Africa in his agenda. We were also reassured to note that that priority figured in the decisions taken during the first 12 months of his mandate. We are convinced that he will not delay in following up the recommendations of CPC and ACABQ and, as I said earlier, the insistent request of the African Group. We will return to this in due course when we consider the question of cooperation between the United Nations and Africa, in particular NEPAD.

The second challenge I wish to mention concerns climate change. In that respect, we wish to commend the President's initiative to make climate change an essential theme of our work. We welcome the fact that the high-level event on 24 September 2007 reflected global consensus on the need for urgent action to preserve planet Earth. We continue to believe that the Kyoto Protocol is a relevant instrument towards a genuine reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and we hope that the December 2007 Bali Conference will trigger a process leading to a post-2012 climate agreement.

The urgency of action on climate change is greater. Global warming has much more devastating effects in developing countries, because they are less well equipped to deal with it. Thus, millions of lives are threatened by floods, and meagre development efforts are laid waste by the encroachment of deserts. This is an area that demands concrete, immediate and concerted action by the international community.

The third challenge concerns peace and security, which the report addresses at length. Here, we wish to commend the Organization's conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. In that context, Africa intends to gradually increase its contributions to peacekeeping forces. That is why, in addition to the two institutions that train experienced units, in Ghana and Mali, my country, with the support of donor States, has been urged to establish an institution to train international police and security personnel for African States wishing to contribute to United Nations or African Union peacekeeping forces. We will have an opportunity to learn a bit more about that at the donor conference for such a school, to be held at United Nations Headquarters on 22 October 2007. Naturally, we are counting on active participation by all Member States.

My country welcomes the Secretary-General's bold reforms of structures responsible for peace and security issues. Likewise, we welcome the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which will be an important instrument in the fight against that phenomenon. It is up to all Member States to demonstrate their goodwill so that the long-awaited comprehensive convention on international terrorism can be finalized.

Strengthening the Organization — the ultimate goal of the reform projects under discussion — is clearly necessary, because the challenges to be met are great and complex. We continue to believe that strengthening the authority of the General Assembly must be among the essential components of United Nations reform. Furthermore, the Security Council needs to be changed in its structure and its functioning — changes that would take into account the new configuration of the world.

It is in this spirit that Africa has demonstrated cooperation, understanding and transparency. Indeed, we have issued a set of proposals to the world, contained in what has come to be called the Ezulwini Consensus, which was published as a working document of our organization. In that document, our continent suggests increasing the number of seats in both membership categories. Our continent also suggests allocating two permanent seats for Africa, with the right of veto. We are still waiting for a positive response from other regions. In particular, we are awaiting such a response because we believe that Africa's proposals and suggestions are extremely appropriate. In fact, ours is the only continent not to have a permanent seat on the Security Council.

Not long ago, we inaugurated a new tool for promoting and protecting human rights throughout the world. As members may have guessed, it is the Human Rights Council. It is highly desirable to avoid the errors and equivocations observed in the functioning of the Commission on Human Rights. We are thinking in

particular of the politicization and selectivity that ultimately discredited the former Commission.

Referring to human rights leads me to touch once again upon the need to create a community that accepts its diversity and fosters tolerance. Indeed, if civilizations have often clashed throughout history, they have always ultimately agreed to organize a dynamic of peaceful existence in order to ensure their survival. Either the world will be rich in its diversity of cultures and civilizations or it will cease to exist.

In addition to its necessary reform, the effectiveness of our Organization also depends on its cooperation with regional organizations to maintain peace and security and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sustainable development. Here, we welcome the innovations that the Secretary-General has proposed to that end. In the same spirit, Central Africa remains very intent in its request for a permanent presence of the Secretariat in our subregion, through the establishment of a Central African office headed by an Under-Secretary-General.

In conclusion, the delegation of Cameroon wishes once again to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his excellent report, as well as its support for his plan to reform the Organization and his intention to strengthen constructive cooperation between the General Assembly and the Secretariat so as to ensure more effective functioning of the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now call on the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): At the outset, my delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his first comprehensive report (A/62/1). We look forward to working with him and with the membership to make the United Nations ever more responsive to the needs of all people.

As we reach the halfway point in the process of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the time is ripe to take stock of our successes and failures. Still today, almost 10 million children under 5 years old die each year, mostly from preventable causes. Too many mothers die in childbirth from preventable and treatable complications. Last year, 2.9 million people died of HIV/AIDS-related causes, and half of the developing world lacks even basic sanitation.

The global community seems to have been losing focus on the need to ensure that everyone enjoys the right to basic health care. Although studies show that simple medical prevention is often one of the most cost-effective and successful ways of improving the health and stability of society, primary care is often neglected or replaced by more selective, and even culturally divisive, methods of health care. Focusing on the whole range of basic health care will surely make a substantial contribution towards the achievement of the MDGs and a saner health policy.

Such a sad landscape is made bleaker by the fact that, as children die and generations lack even the basic necessities of life, we have continued to drift towards mutual and global destruction. The annual military expenditures of well over one trillion dollars, the talent and resources devoted to types of technology that destroy lives and our planet and the persistence of the misplaced trust in the law of force rather than in the force of law are just some examples of actions that are contrary to goodness and human reason. To prevent that situation from worsening, the United Nations, with the cooperation of all Member States, must renew its commitment to the preservation of life at every level and in every corner of the world.

It is nevertheless encouraging to note recent findings indicating some real progress in achieving the MDGs. It is only right to recognize the efforts of those countries that have contributed to the gains made. Now, greater attention must be paid to those States that still trail the rest of the developing world. In order to encourage both public and private investment and to create a favourable economic and social climate, peace and security and the rule of law should underpin reform efforts.

The United Nations is increasingly being called upon to respond to multifarious challenges around the world. To meet this ever-growing need for humanitarian assistance, the United Nations should continue to work to promote partnerships with civil society that create a predictable and reactive humanitarian response. Member States play an important role in addressing humanitarian crises. By giving safe and unhindered access to humanitarian workers, they not only fulfil their responsibility to protect, but also help ensure that those who suffer from a humanitarian tragedy are not re-victimized.

During the last few years, the Organization has dealt with issues related to culture and religion in an increasing number of resolutions, meetings and side events. That aspect is unfortunately omitted in the report. Most often, it is only when tensions and conflict emerge that Governments and international organizations call on religious and cultural forces to help establish dialogue between parties. Cooperating in programmes against incitement to hatred, witnessing for peace and against violence and peacemaking through faith-based agencies are among the many things religious communities and their leaders can do to end conflict and to build conditions for peace.

My delegation commends the United Nations commitment to addressing the many challenges facing development, peace and security and human rights. In so doing, the Organization must maintain its transparency and accountability to the decisions of the Member States. To that end, modifications to the Millennium Development Goals, including the creation of new targets, as referred to in Annex II, need to be undertaken in an open manner rather than as a result of executive or administrative decisions.

Finally, it is our earnest desire that the sixty-second session of the General Assembly be strongly marked by a renewed sense of commitment and action towards not only achieving the Millennium Development Goals, but also to completely fulfilling the vision of hope of this institution.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of Palestine.

Mr. Hijazi (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express our thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his report on the work of the Organization (A/62/1), which comes at a time when countries of the world look to the United Nations for progressive actions in facing challenging conditions, noting that the United Nations is the best universal instrument for collective efforts to face the challenges of our world.

The Palestinian delegation expresses its support for the ambitious plans to reform the Organization and to strengthen constructive cooperation between the General Assembly and the Secretariat in the context of transparency, confidence. We seek a more vital role for the Organization in the field of disarmament and other spheres and note the central role played by the Secretary-General in conducting the Dialogue among Civilizations and the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, and his continued efforts to improve the Organization.

The Palestinian people also look to the United Nations to help them end their tragedy and find a comprehensive and lasting solution to their problem, which is as old as the Organization and which is closely related to it. This Organization, as a peace organization, has assumed the major responsible role concerning that question pending its comprehensive solution.

The United Nations plays a major role in dealing with the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. United Nations resolutions are the legal and fundamental references for solving the Palestinian question and for the peace process in the Middle East. The United Nations is also a member of the Quartet, which is seeking to find a just and comprehensive international solution to the Palestinian question.

The United Nations organs and agencies, notably the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), have a basic and important role in supporting and assisting the Palestinian people to overcome their humanitarian plight. The United Nations has adopted many resolutions and decisions that emphasize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the duty to protect them.

There is international consensus on the dangers to international peace and security as a result of the continued absence of a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question, especially to the stability of the Middle East region. Continued Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, which has now lasted more than 40 years, the refugee problem, which has lasted more than 60 years, continued violation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people by the occupying Power and the failure of the international community to relieve the suffering of the Palestinians, are true, moral and serious challenge to all of the principles and rules on which the Organization was founded.

The issues dealt with in the report include the Millennium Development Goals, climate change, sustainable development, conflict prevention, peace and peacekeeping, human rights, the rule of law and

humanitarian affairs, all of which are unavailable in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, because of the foreign occupation and its illegal practices. Yet, the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization does not deal with the question in a suitable manner within the context of the role and responsibilities of the United Nations. In that context, we wish to emphasize the following.

First, the Palestinian question is the most longstanding issue without a solution on the United Nations agenda. The responsibility of the United Nations towards this question is ongoing and, until such time that it is solved in all its aspects, the credibility of this Organization will be jeopardized.

Secondly, the Palestinian question is of special importance as regards human rights issues in the world, as was emphasized by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Mr. John Dugard. The issue of human rights in Palestine has been on the United Nations agenda for 60 years. It is a real test for the United Nations, a test of the Organization's degree of commitment to protecting human rights in Palestine. If the United Nations and the international community fail to put an end to the violations to which the Palestinian people are subjected, the international movement for human rights — which is considered a major accomplishment of humanity during the past 60 years — faces a grave danger.

Thirdly, in this context, we would like to emphasize the need to strengthen the role of the Organization in maintaining and protecting international law, especially the Fourth Geneva Convention, relative to the protection of civilians during times of war, which is a basic principle underlying the responsibility to protect.

Fourthly, we emphasize the importance of strengthening the role of the Human Rights Council and respect for and implementation of its resolutions in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, which established the Council, and with the Charter.

In conclusion, the delegation of Palestine reiterates its thanks and gratitude to the Secretary-General for his valuable report. We wish to assure him of our support for his efforts to promote human rights, to uphold international law, to bring justice and freedom to all peoples of the world, especially to those who are still under occupation.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker on the debate on this agenda item. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization contained in document A/62/1?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 109.

Agenda item 114

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(h) Appointment of members of the Joint Inspection Unit

Note by the Secretary-General (A/62/174)

The Acting President: As indicated in document A/62/174, on 11 July 2007, Inspector Juan Luis Larrabure of Peru submitted his resignation to the Chairperson of the Joint Inspection Unit, effective 30 September 2007. Inspector Larrabure was appointed by the General Assembly on 6 June 2003 for a five-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2004 and expiring on 31 December 2008. In accordance with article 4, paragraph 5 of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, the Chairperson notified the Secretary-General on 11 July 2007 of the vacancy and of her decision to waive the requirement of six months notice stipulated in article 4, paragraph 3 of the statute. As a result of the resignation of Inspector Juan-Luis Larrabure of Peru, the General Assembly is required, during the sixty-second session, to appoint a member to fill the vacancy in the Joint Inspection Unit.

It is further stated in the note of the Secretary-General that, in order for consultations to be held as stipulated in article 3, and to align the term of office with those of the other Inspectors, the Assembly may wish to consider filling the vacancy for the term of office beginning on 1 January 2008 and expiring on 31 December 2012.

In this connection, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to fill this vacancy for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2008 and expiring on 31 December 2012?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: As also indicated in document A/62/174, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 1 of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, the President of the General Assembly shall consult with Member States to draw up a list of countries — in this case, one country — which would be requested to propose a candidate for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit. After holding the necessary consultations, I should like to communicate to the Assembly the information received from the Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States that Peru has been endorsed to propose a candidate for the vacancy from among the Latin American and Caribbean States.

In accordance with article 3, paragraph 1 of the statute of Joint Inspection Unit, Peru will therefore be requested to submit the name of a candidate and the curriculum vitae highlighting the candidate's relevant qualifications for the task ahead. After holding the appropriate consultations described in article 3, paragraph *2* or the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, including consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council and with the Secretary-General in his capacity as Chairman of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, I will propose a qualified candidate to the Assembly for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit for a period beginning on 1 January 2008 and expiring on 31 December 2012.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (h) of agenda item 114. I thank delegates for their cooperation.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.